

***Spiranthes porrifolia* Lindl.**

western ladies-tresses
Orchidaceae (Orchid Family)

Status: State Sensitive

Rank: G4S2

General Description: Terrestrial, glabrous 8-20 inches tall; leaves 3 to 5, elliptic-lanceolate, basal or on lower portion of stem, sometimes absent at flowering time; stems with a few bracts above the leaves; inflorescence a dense spiral of up to forty small yellowish flowers in several vertical ranks; floral bracts lanceolate, ½ inch long; dorsal sepal lanceolate, lateral sepals similar but oblique; petals linear-lanceolate; lip ovate, not expanded at apex, base with prominent protuberances; column 1/16 inch long with dorsal anther; ovary sessile, stout, 1/16 inch long.

Identification Tips: The taxon may be confused with *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*, but *S. porrifolia* is more cream colored or yellowish than *S. romanzoffiana* which is white. The petals and sepals of *S. romanzoffiana* are united to form a hood, and the lip is violin-shaped. The petals and sepals of *S. porrifolia* do not form a hood. *S. porrifolia* flowers several months earlier (May-August) than *S. romanzoffiana* (July-Oct).

Phenology: Flowers May through August.

Range: Southern Washington to Southern California. In WA, the taxon is known from Chelan, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, and Skamania counties. Occurs in the Columbia Basin, Eastern Cascades, and Western Cascades physiographic provinces.

Habitat: Wet meadows, along streams, in bogs, and on seepage slopes. Elevation 60-6800 feet. Associated species from some of the known sites include: ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), slim-leaved onion (*Allium amplexans*), Burke's larkspur (*Delphinium burkei*), harvest brodiaea (*Brodiaea coronaria*), common evening primrose (*Oenothera villosa*), birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), moth mullein (*Verbascum blattaria*), chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*), white sweet-clover (*Melilotus alba*), rabbit-foot clover (*Trifolium arvense*), and everlasting pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*).

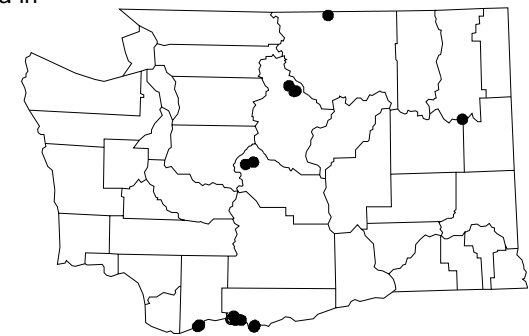
Spiranthes porrifolia

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Known distribution of
Spiranthes porrifolia in
Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Ecology: Orchids generally require symbiotic associations with mycorrhizal fungi for seed germination. Plants of some species of *Spiranthes* are initially saprophytic, persisting underground for several years before emerging above ground. The tendency for prolonged dormancy in orchids should be considered in survey and monitoring efforts.

State Status Comments: There are a limited number of occurrences, all of which have small populations. There are < 500 plants total at all of the known sites.

Inventory Needs: Additional inventory is needed in appropriate habitats throughout its range. Surveys should be conducted in potential habitat for multiple years due to the species tendency for prolonged dormancy.

Threats and Management Concerns: Trampling, both human and animal, grazing, mowing, and road maintenance are all potential threats to the species. Other threats include rural and agricultural development, quarrying, and herbicide drift.

Comments: Synonymous with *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* Cham. var. *porrifolia* (Lindl.) Ames & Corell.

References:

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